



BOROUGH OF SUTTON COLDFIELD.

To the Chairman and Members of the
HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

and

To the Chairman and Members of the
MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In accordance with instructions contained in Ministry of Health Circular 2773, of March 10th, 1945, I beg to present my Annual Report for 1942 in a shortened, interim form.

EXTRACTS FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS

Live birth-rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	15.65
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Still-birth rate per 1,000 total (live & still) births	22.16
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Death-rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	10.50
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Death-rate of infants under one year of age :-

All infants per 1,000 live births	40.79
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Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	38.94
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Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births	100
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Births.

The birth-rate for the Borough (15.65) is the highest recorded since 1922. It compares with a rate of 15.8 for England and Wales and 18.4 for the Smaller Towns. The still-birth rate of .35 per 1,000 population compares very favourably with the rates for England and Wales (.54) and the Smaller Towns (.62).

Deaths.

The death-rate from all causes (10.50) shows little variation from pre-war figures, and is below the rates for England and Wales (11.6) and the Smaller Towns (12.1) for the year under review.

Of the single causes of death influenza accounts for a mortality rate ^{which} is more than double the influenzal mortality rate for England and Wales, but the rates for other infectious diseases compare satisfactorily with those for the Country as a whole. No deaths were registered from measles or whooping cough and the death-rate for diphtheria is .02 as compared with .05 for England and Wales.

The most significant increase in mortality during the war years is recorded under intra-cranial lesions in the age groups over 65 years. The average mortality rate under this head for the war years 1940-1942 is 1.22 as compared with the rate of .63 for the pre-war years 1936-1938. The rate for 1942 is 1.30.

Suicide as a cause of death has shown a remarkable decline in the war years, but deaths from road traffic accidents have increased.

Infant Mortality.

The deaths of infants under 1 year assigned to the Borough correspond to an infant mortality rate of 40.79 per 1,000 live births. This rate compares with 49 for England and Wales and 46 for the Smaller Towns.

The deaths are classified to prematurity, congenital malformations, birth injuries and infantile diseases, pneumonia and enteritis.

Deaths from Enteritis (under 2 years).

The death-rate from this disease is 4.5 per 1,000 live births, which compares with 5.2 for England and Wales and 4.8 for the Smaller Towns.

Maternal Mortality.

No deaths were recorded as due to puerperal pyrexia and the rate for causes other than puerperal pyrexia is 1.48 per 1,000 total births (live and still).

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Routine sanitary inspections have been carried out in so far as limitation of staff permitted. The supervision of food and water supplies and other essential services has been sufficiently maintained to provide reasonable security against serious threat to the public health.

The analyses of the mains water supplies have given satisfactory results and the supplies have retained their high standard of purity.

A filtration and chlorination plant was installed at the Keepers Pool baths and was put into operation on 10th July. A sample of water taken during normal summer use of the bath, and whilst the purification plant was in operation gave satisfactory bacterial counts.

Milk supplies undoubtedly have been less satisfactory than in previous years and, from a review of the findings of analyses and inspections there is evidence that many supplies have fallen short of a reasonable standard of cleanliness. No doubt producers have been handicapped by insufficient and unskilled labour, which would give rise to conditions incompatible with the protection of milk from accidental contamination, but it is the undesignated milk, retailed in the Borough to which particular attention is to be drawn. No less than 38% of samples of pasteurised milk taken in the Borough failed to conform with the requirements of the Special Designations Regulations.

Fourteen samples examined for living tubercle bacilli gave negative results.

The list of unsound food condemned includes meat, fish, bacon, fruit and vegetables and other miscellaneous items, the more important of which are eggs and tea.

Pigs slaughtered under Ministry of Food licences number 323, of which 312 were inspected, and of those inspected 7.4% were found to be infected by tuberculosis. As noted in a previous report the disposal of these unfit carcasses is not controlled by Public Health statutory powers.

HOUSING.

The number of houses inspected during the year is 1,130, for which purpose 2,598 inspections were made. The houses found unfit in any material degree number 353, or 31% of the total inspected.

Owing to shortage of labour and material increasing difficulty has been experienced by owners in getting repairs carried out to their property, but, in spite of this a large proportion of the defects were remedied.

No fresh cases of overcrowding were brought to notice during the year and the overcrowding of one house was relieved. At the end of the year three houses remained overcrowded.

Camping Sites.

As noted in my Report for 1941, appeals to the Court by individual van dwellers at the Mill, Blake Street and at Camp Farm against the decision of the Local Authority to refuse licences, were allowed.

The conditions imposed by the Court have had no effect on the abatement of nuisance arising from unpurified sewage.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There is an overall reduction in the notifications of infectious diseases for the year under review. The revised figure (excluding measles and whooping cough) is 187 as compared with 217 for the previous year, the decrease being chiefly in respect of diphtheria, pneumonia and respiratory tuberculosis. There were no cases of enteric disease as compared with eighteen in 1941.

Scarlet Fever.

A slight increase is recorded in the incidence of this disease. Over 70% of the cases occurred in children of school age and 60% arose in Hill and Boldmere West Wards. The disease was evenly distributed throughout the year. The mortality was nil.

Diphtheria.

Thirteen cases, in which the diagnosis was verified, were notified amongst the civil population as compared with 21 during the previous year. One death was registered as due to the disease, in a child who had not been immunized.

Artificial immunisation was continued and the number of children in the Area who had the completed course of inoculations during the year is 887. Three of the notified cases had been immunized, two privately and one under the Local Authority's arrangements.

Cerebro -spinal Meningitis.

There were seven cases in the Area as compared with 4 in 1941. One death from the disease was assigned to the Borough.

Pneumonia.

The notification rate for this disease is the lowest recorded in any of the war years. Four only of the cases were classed as influenzal.

Tuberculosis.

There has been a satisfactory decline in the notifications of respiratory tuberculosis as compared with 1941 and the number of notifications, 15, compares with the average yearly figure of 14.9 for the pre-war decade. There has been a slight increase in non-respiratory forms in the year under review.

Measles.

The notifications of this disease fell from 335 in 1941 to 154 in 1942. The highest incidence was in the 5-10 year old age group and the disease was most prevalent in the Boldmere West and Wainley Wards. The mortality was nil.

Whooping Cough.

There were 45 notified cases in 1942 as compared with 201 in 1941, and the notification rate compares favourably with the rates for England and Wales and the Smaller Towns. The incidence of the disease was highest at ages under 5 years. The mortality was nil.

A clinic for the immunization of young children was established in September.

Puerperal Pyrexia.

The notification rate is 16.25 per 1,000 total births as compared with rates of 12.61 for England and Wales and 10.80 for the Smaller Towns. The mortality for the Borough was nil as compared with a rate of .42 for England and Wales.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Four cases were notified during the year and all recovered without damage to the eyes.

Scabies Order, 1941.

The increase in scabies, to which reference was made in my Report for 1941, was checked in the year under review, and at the end of the year there was clear evidence of a marked decline in the incidence of the disease throughout the Area.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

Public Health Act 1936, Section 203.

Live births notified	...	...	...	598
Still " "	...	...	...	8
Births transferred inwards				
		Live births	...	118
		Still "	...	9
Births transferred outwards				
		Live births	...	84
		Still "	...	1

Maternity and Child Welfare Centres.

The Centre at Boldmore was transferred on October 7th to Britwell Hall, where three rooms and kitchen accommodation are rented for one day weekly. The Centre at Hill was transferred on November 3rd from the cookery room at the Girls' School to All Saints Hall.

The total number of sessions held at all Centres during the year is 160 and the numbers of attendances are:- children, 5,080 ; ante-natal cases, 542 ; post-natal cases, 18.

Provision for Maternity.

Institutional. Fourteen women, referred from the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres were admitted to the Emergency Hospital, Nuneaton, for confinement. No cases were admitted to the private nursing homes under the arrangements made by the Local Authority.

Twenty-five ante-natal cases were referred from the Centres to the Birmingham Maternity Hospital, Loveday Street for consultation, and, of these 13 were admitted for confinement. In all, 57 cases were admitted to the Maternity Hospital from the Borough during the year. The nursing homes, in their private capacity, provided accommodation for 261 cases.

Of the total live births assignable to the Area it is estimated that 46% took place in institutions.

Domiciliary. Provision for both domiciliary and institutional confinements in the Borough was becoming increasingly difficult on account of the shortage of domestic help, and the closure of one or more private nursing homes in the Area was foreshadowed for this reason. Having regard to all the circumstances the Committee decided that there was an urgent need for adequate domestic help for domiciliary confinements, and that this would be met most effectively by the expansion and development of the Home Help Service.

Orthopaedic and other Treatment.

Six children were referred to the Cripples Hospital, Birmingham, under the Local Authority's arrangements, for the following defects :- knock-knees (4), flat foot (1), and bowed tibia (1).

Seven children were refracted by the Local Authority's Ophthalmic Surgeon and two babies received treatment at the Birmingham Eye Hospital for ophthalmia neonatorum.

The Local Authority's Dental Surgeon treated 19 children referred from the Centres.

Pediculosis in Children Under 5 years.

(Ministry of Health Circular 2831, July 2nd, 1943)

The addresses of school children, found to be infested are notified to the Health Visitors who, in the course of their duties make special inquiry as to infestation in other members of the families to which the children belong. In such cases the Health Visitor is sustained in her action by the school report, and, if her approach is tactful she will probably obtain necessary co-operation. Once infestation has been identified disinfection presents little, if any difficulty.

If, on the other hand the duty of examining children's heads were included in the routine work of the Health Visitor, I take leave to suggest that resentment amongst parents would seriously prejudice all other health visiting activities.

Infestation in the schools may be taken as a reliable guide to the extent of infestation in families; and, relying on the schools infestation statistics for the Area, as quoted below, and on other available information, the need for such a general system of inspection would not appear to be indicated here.

(School Statistics).

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Number of inspections.</u>	<u>Percent: of children inspected found verminous. (including nits)</u>
1938	6,279	.90%
1941	9,649	.96%
1942	10,218	.82%

Health Visitors.

Miss G. E. Brigham resigned, and left to take another appointment on June 10th and Miss M. Wakelin, who was appointed in her place commenced duty on July 15th. With the exception of this interval the full establishment of three health visitors was maintained throughout the year.

Domiciliary Visits by Health Visitors.

1st visits to expectant mothers	...	160	
Total " " " " " "	...	...	348
1st visits to children under 1 year		561	
Total " " " " " "		...	2,962
Total visits to children between the ages of 1 and 5 years	...	...	4,039
Visits to boarded out children	...	...	40
" " old persons	...	...	10
" for inquiries into still-births	...	...	16
" " " " puerperal pyrexia			11
" " " " ophthalmia neonatorum			4
" " " " maternal death	...		1
Inspections of Nursing Homes	20
Special request visits	463
Unsuccessful visits	1,675
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			9,589
			<hr/>
Number of households visited	8,723

I have the honour to be,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

J. H. Wright
Medical Officer of Health.

Council House,
Sutton Coldfield.

July, 1943.